

PUBLIC HEARING
June 16, 2003

PUBLIC HEARINGS were held on Monday June 16, 2003, at 6:49 p.m. in the Assembly Room, Berkeley County Office Building, 223 N. Live Oak Drive, South Carolina, to solicit public comment, written or oral, on Special Tax District Budgets Numbered 03-24 (Devon Forest), 03-25 (Pimlico), 03-26, Sangaree), 03-27 (Tall Pines), and 03-28 (Special Fire Tax District).

Present: Mr. James H. Rozier, Jr., Supervisor-Chairman; Mr. Milton Farley, Councilmember District No. 1; Mrs. Judith K. Spooner, Councilmember District No. 2; Mr. William E. Crosby, Councilmember District No. 3; Mr. Charles E. Davis, Councilmember District No. 4; Mr. Dennis L. Fish, Councilmember District No. 5; Mrs. Judy C. Mims, Councilmember District No. 6; Mr. Caldwell Pinckney, Jr. Councilmember District No. 7; Mr. Steve C. Davis, Councilmember District No. 8; Mr. D. Mark Stokes, County Attorney, and Ms. Barbara B. Austin, Clerk of County Council.

The requirements of the Freedom of Information Act have been complied with by posting of the time, date, place and agenda of this Public Hearing of Berkeley County Council at the entrance of the Berkeley County Office Building, 223 N. Live Oak Drive, Moncks Corner, South Carolina, published in THE HANAHAN NEWS on May 21, 2003, and in THE BERKELEY HERALD on May 23, 2003, as evidenced by attached copy of Affidavits of Publication, and a copy of such notice was mailed to all Council Members, the News media, and other interested citizens.

Chairman Rozier called the meeting to order and stated these Public Hearings were being held to solicit public comment, written or oral, on the Special Tax District Budgets as follows:

Bill No. 03-24, An Ordinance providing for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2003, and ending June 30, 2004, for the Devon Forest Special Tax District operational budget; and to provide for the expenditures of the revenues received by the Devon Forest Special Tax District during the fiscal year.

There were no public comments; therefore the Public Hearing was declared ended at 6:50 p.m.

Bill No. 03-25, An Ordinance providing for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2003, and ending June 30, 2004, for the Pimlico Special Tax District operational budget; and to provide for the expenditures of the revenues received by the Pimlico Special Tax District during the fiscal year.

Chairman Rozier indicated that Councilmember Spooner plans to recommend a Resolution to continue operation of the Pimlico Special Tax District but not approve the budget this evening. This would allow extra time for solving the concerns that exist. He stated he would suggest that if anyone wanted to speak to the Pimlico Special Tax District Budget that they do it prior to consideration of the budget for Third Reading.

There being no further discussion, the Public Hearing was declared ended at 6:51

Bill No. 03-26, An Ordinance providing for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2003, and ending June 30, 2004, for the Sangaree Special Tax District operational budget; and to provide for the expenditures of the revenues received by the Sangaree Special Tax District during the fiscal year.

There were no public comments; therefore, the Public Hearing was declared ended at 6:51 p.m.

Bill No. 03-27, An Ordinance providing for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2003, and ending June 30, 2004, for the Tall Pines Special Tax District operational budget; and to provide for the expenditures of the revenues received by the Tall Pines Special Tax District during the fiscal year.

There being no public comments, the Chairman declared the Public Hearing ended at 6:52 p.m.

Bill No. 03-28, An Ordinance providing for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2003, and ending June 30, 2004, for the operational budget of the Berkeley County Special Fire Tax District within the unincorporated portions of Berkeley County; and to provide for the expenditures of the revenues received by the Special Fire Tax District during the fiscal year.

Chairman Rozier asked if there were any public comments?

Mr. Rembert Wrenn, Fire Commissioner asked would this incorporate the new fee increase? Also, he wanted to be clear on the grants previously discussed, and sure that all of the fire departments would receive the grant.

Chairman Rozier indicated he planned to make a recommendation to Council that they not take any money out of the grants as suggested at last week's Finance Committee Meeting, and that the County pay the amounts recommended to each of the 10 fire departments out of the fund balance. Also, as the money comes back from the additional fee, that the County be paid back and the balance would be there for application for the grant funds. Each fire department would continue to get their grants from the County as they had in the past.

Mr. Wrenn stated a lot of the departments have already obligated certain amounts for truck payments.

Chairman Rozier stated it would accomplish what Council wanted without disturbing the flow of revenue to all of the other departments.

Mr. Rembert asked if the increased amount on the commercial/industrial sites and acreage would be going directly to the fire departments?

Chairman Rozier replied, no. Eighty percent of the 20 percent increase for commercial and residential would go into grant funds; 20 percent would go directly to the fire departments. In reference to vacant lands, the entire increase would go to fire departments within the existing district.

Mr. Wrenn indicated that some of the larger departments expressed that they may not get their fair share and from what was first figured with the 3.5 mills, they probably won't. This constitutes the Board sitting down to see what they could do for the larger departments. Every department has different needs.

Councilmember Crosby stated his concern is still accountability.

Councilmember Fish stated the request received from the Fire Board was \$892,000 to meet those needs. There is no way the fees could be raised to grant that. Also, he has heard a lot about smaller departments and the ISO rating. He stated he would continue to request reports of budgets and all monies received.

Councilmember Mims asked do fire departments respond to automobile fires more often than house fires?

Mr. Wrenn stated that was correct; and also, to first responder calls. He indicated he met with a company in Georgia that charges a fee for those types of calls on the interstate.

Councilmember Pinckney stated he was always concerned about fire departments not having sufficient funds to operate. He asked Mr. Wrenn to tell them the one thing that needs to be done in order to "put this dog to rest once and for all." "There's no doubt in my mind that whatever we do here tonight or whenever, it will come up again."

Mr. Wrenn indicated they needed to bring in an outside consultant. They paid a lot of money and didn't get a whole lot out of it. If Council directs him he could appoint a commission to work with him on that.

Councilmember Fish stated the Board needs to review the County's spending of close to three million dollars a year. What does it cost to run a County fire department?

Councilmember Pinckney indicated he had previously referenced Orangeburg County in that they had a consultant come in and actually fixed the problems they had with their volunteer fire departments. Taxpayers had to pay a little more taxes but at least it took care of the problem.

Mr. Wrenn stated Orangeburg went up 17 mills. He stated they could bring in an outside consultant but they needed to take a good look at what's inside.

Chairman Rozier explained that a recommendation is something that Council considers and decides what to do.

Councilmember Steve Davis stated the Sheriff's Department deals with criminals, etc. Judging from the letter Goose Creek Rural wrote they are upset that they would have to give up some of the money to smaller fire departments. He asked Mr. Wrenn did he think it would be best in the long run to have a Countywide Fire Department?

Mr. Wrenn stated it would in the next couple of years but not at this point. Volunteers are rendering free services. If they go to a Countywide Fire Department it would probably cost the taxpayers a 40-mill increase. This is a very large county, and according to regulations if people are hired there would have to be four on each shift, which would mean 12-15 people in each department.

Councilmember Steve Davis indicated that if the County Sheriff's Department would cross-train with the Fire Departments they could move forward.

Mr. Wrenn agreed they are only piece-mealing the situation.

Mr. Jerry Padgett of 1625 Alexander Circle stated in a previous meeting he asked "when is only enough?" He stated he understands the fire departments need money to operate. Also, in a previous meeting he indicated what his Social Security earnings were and what percentage comes out for Medicare. Each time the County only wants \$10 more dollars, that is \$10 dollars less that he has to live on. Mr. Padgett stated he was 71 years old and it's time that he starts enjoying some of his money in his twilight years. He stated he admires the people who do volunteer fire department work, "that's their choice." Mr. Padgett stated, "if you want me to go a Retirement Home someplace, I could sell out and move, but right now it is physically impossible for me to keep giving \$10 here, \$75 here and another \$10 there."

Mr. Wrenn stated Whitesville has an ISO Rating of 7.9 but would drop to near 5, which would reduce Homeowner's insurance \$300 to \$400 per year.

There being no further comments, the Public Hearings were declared ended at 7:13 p.m.

S/Barbara B. Austin
Clerk of County Council

July 28, 2003
Date Approved

AGENDA FOR PUBLIC HEARINGS

Public Hearings to solicit public comment, written or oral, will be held on Monday June 16, 2003, at 6:30 p. m., or as soon thereafter as may be heard following other public hearings, in the Assembly Room, Berkeley County Office Building, 223 N. Live Oak Drive, Moncks Corner, S. C., regarding the following:

CALL TO ORDER

1. Bill No. 03-11, an Ordinance to amend Chapter 7 of the Code of Ordinances, Berkeley County, South Carolina, to provide for the regulation of the use of Public and Private Water Distribution Systems and Wastewater Collection, treatment, and disposal systems and providing penalties for violations thereof.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION

2. Bill No. 03-20, an Ordinance to modify the official Zoning and Development Standards Map of Berkeley County, South Carolina, Re: Lyde Bailey for Teddy & Mary Caddel and Daniel & Sharon Hunter, 200, 202 & 206 Berkeley Circle, Summerville, TMS #232-00-01-013, 014, 015, 016, & 017, (5 lots) from R-2, Mobile Home Residential District, to GC General Commercial District. Council District No. 4.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION

3. Bill No. 03-21 an Ordinance to modify the official Zoning and Development Standards Map of Berkeley County, South Carolina, Re: Steve Davis, 1868 Cainhoy Road, Huger, TMS #256-00-00-024, (2.07 acre portion, 90 acres total), from GC, General Commercial District & R-2, Mobile Home Residential District, to R-2, Mobile Home Residential District. Council District No. 8.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION

4. Bill No. 03-22, an Ordinance to amend Section I of Ordinance No. 80-3-8 to modify requirements for appointments to the Berkeley County Aeronautics Commission.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION

5. Bill No. 03-30, an Ordinance to amend Ordinance No. 99-7-41 in order to adopt the most recent version of the National Electric Code as mandated by the State of South Carolina.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION

SPECIAL TAX DISTRICT BUDGETS

6. Bill No. 03-24, An Ordinance providing for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2003, and ending June 30, 2004, for the Devon Forest Special Tax District operational budget; and to provide for the expenditures of the revenues received by the Devon Forest Special Tax District during the fiscal year.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION

7. Bill No. 03-25, An Ordinance providing for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2003, and ending June 30, 2004, for the Pimlico Special Tax District operational budget; and to provide for the expenditures of the revenues received by the Pimlico Special Tax District during the fiscal year.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION

8. Bill No. 03-26, An Ordinance providing for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2003, and ending June 30, 2004, for the Sangaree Special Tax District operational budget; and to provide for the expenditures of the revenues received by the Sangaree Special Tax District during the fiscal year.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION

9. Bill No. 03-27, An Ordinance providing for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2003, and ending June 30, 2004, for the Tall Pines Special Tax District operational budget; and to provide for the expenditures of the revenues received by the Tall Pines Special Tax District during the fiscal year.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION

10. Bill No. 03-28, An Ordinance providing for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2003, and ending June 30, 2004, for the operational budget of the Berkeley County Special Fire Tax District within the unincorporated portions of Berkeley County; and to provide for the expenditures of the revenues received by the Special Fire Tax District during the fiscal year.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION

ADJOURNMENT

June 11, 2003
S/Barbara B. Austin
Clerk of County Council